

## [Minimum of Parts]

JUL 6 1939

FOLKLORE

\*\*\*\*

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt Herman Partnow

ADDRESS 557 W. 144th Street 557 W. 144th Street

DATE June 1, 1939

SUBJECT Maritime- THE MINIMUM OF PARTS AND THE MAXIMUM OF POWER

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview Bar on Eleventh Avenue - engineer of S.S. Roosevelt is just after being paid off.[.]?]
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

## Library of Congress

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C TEXT OF INTERVIEW (UNEDITED)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Saul Levitt Herman Partnow

ADDRESS 557 W. 144th Street 557 W. 144th Street

DATE June 1, 1939

SUBJECT MARITIME - THE MINIMUM OF PARTS AND THE MAXIMUM OF POWER

Three beers. When I go ashore I want to hose em an get drunk. American girls are the most intelligent and the cleanest cut girls in the world. No girls are like the American — and the sweetest girls in the world are Americans. All the fellas'll tellya that!

Engines is what I like. That's it. I gotta be near machinery because I know machinery: I'm not satisfied unless I'm around it. Listen. I can see a guy breaking a chair but if the guy that tried it came over to any machine of mine he'd find me guarding it.. Say, do you know anything about machinery? Take a car for example. I don't like to see a man punish a car. I've turned my opinion against a man - you know how the teeth don't [mesh?] right when you shift careless — I can't stand it. And I'll tell you why: because it's the man that built it that's being destroyed. Do you know what I mean? A man built that machine.

## Library of Congress

We're all engineers in my family. My father was an engineer. It's all back through the family. I'm the only kid. I got six uncles that are in different kinds of engineering and one of em is an engineer at sea like me he's the chief engineer of the [Wichita?].

2

I call that heredity. My grandfather and my father went to sea and my father don't want me to come back without the officer's gold braid. The old man was chief engineer of the Norther Way — say I wish you could meet my father and mother! Ain't people grand in the midwest, the most wonderful people?

Three beers. I would say I've been at sea twelve continuous years. Now why do I go to sea? Because my father was a sailor. My wife is dead: tuberculosis. I've gotta little girl twelve years old out in Ohio. What am I gonna go ashore for. How many machinests you got making a hundred and twenty a month steady?

I'm gonna have a lotta fun tonight but right now I'm thirsty, three beers. Here's another opinion: I'm Episcopalian Anglo-Saxon. But I have a religion of my own an it's the religion of life. That's it. It's the religion of life vital and going on. Life to me is a process of becoming like your creator. You are doing everything yourself bein' alive and so forth and continuing. But you are a process of becoming. Do you get it? The Bible - I treat it as if it was a fantastic literature of past ages. Life is absolutely alive and living that's certain and positive. You never seen any dead life hanging around, did ye? That's what I mean, that's my own religion. If we can knock down real barriers, the real prejudicial barriers an tariff walls. One universal language, one universal religion, one universal money, one universal - an instead of building human armies an navies one police force for the whole world. We wouldn't have no wars which arise otta the barriers.

If we can build cars better than other countries let us build, em. Denmark can make cheese better let her make cheese. If the Chinese can make better firecrackers let 'em make em. Like a machine with all the parts doing all their work.

3

I like machines, I like nice machinery. I have a machine of my own, my own engine. It's a rotary Diesel engine that revolves like a turbine — instead of precipitatin it revolves. Only pure Diesel. There's about thirteen fellers tryin to build the same thing.

All I need is backing. Somebody that could have money. This motor is not along the traditional lines; it's against the traditions. But I've gotta have time to work on it. Ya gotta study it. You gotta know how you're gonna get compression. This motor is simplifying engineering down to the old ages. It's taking engineering back to the process of stripping her to her essentials - an no sixteen cylinders an cogs an millions of parts but a minimum of parts and a maximum of power instead of a maximum of parts and a minimum of power.

Say, if you ever have a chance, if you meet somebody that's interested in backing that engine lemme know. You don't know it but if I got backing you might be talking to Edison or Ford — aw it's a hundred to one chance against me like inna horserace! Here I'm hangin around a joint like this. Drinkin and fartin around.

My father was chief engineer of the Gulfoil Corporation [g?] of Toledo — an he was sayin he don't believe in any new type of engine but he's willing for me to go on and do something with it. You see there's too many mechanical parts in most machines. My motor piston has one casting. Aw, the old man is the old type of engineer of the steam engineering type old style but I'm the radical professional engineering type. Everything electricity. I believe in things that's thought impossible — that's what makes the wheels go around.

4

Is everybody thirsty? Three beers. If Henry Ford or Walter Chrysler were sitting here I bet you dollars to doughnuts they'd give me ten thousand dollars to spend time on her. Another thing: alloys. Chromium steel and aluminum is the best yet. But if I had the money I'd study the stresses and strains on her because she gives more than three thousand

## Library of Congress

revolutions per minute and the r. p. m. of the radical motors they got in airplanes are around 2500 [?] to 3000 r. p. m. but that's slow! Mine's faster but I gotta have a chance to study her. No time on ship.

The minimum of parts and the maximum of power! That's what she is. That's what I see in the whole world. The min. of parts and the max. of power and we be goin ahead a hundred years. Some day we're gonna have motors simplified you can exchange them like money. You can drop in to a gas station an have it changed for thirty dollars. I'm just a practical engineer. I went up to M I T but they wouldn't let me in. They said I'm too old. They want a kid of eighteen that don't know the difference between a screwdriver and a hammer and they're gonna have these kids advanced an educated. It ain't everything to be a professor. There's some practical engineers that could show em. Practical! I learned it by hard knocks. — I got it on my [hand.s?]

What the hell. It's the same on ship. I'm a petty officer an I'll never wear the gold braid. Cadets, college boys with pull are comin aboard. We got em on board all the time. [?] Three beers.